REFLECTION

The old year has passed, and the new year has come.
I am still among you.
Yet I do not feel within me the joy you might expect from me. I sense that my time is approaching; I hear a voice echoing above my head:
“Give an account of your stewardship!”

Can I give a satisfactory account?
Have I been a faithful steward before God, before humanity, and even before myself?

Where I expected salvation, I saw destruction; where I expected peace, I saw anger; where I expected love, I saw coldness. At the very moment I believed I stood on the firmest ground, the ice broke beneath my feet…

Now my heart is shattered; I am no longer the person I was yesterday! Love, hope, and trust have abandoned me.

Then why should I still live? Why did God save me when I was about to be crushed under the hooves of horses?

What remains for me in a world where I make mistake upon mistake, deceive myself, and will deceive myself again in an hour?

Yesterday I was poor, weak, insignificant, humble, and ignorant; yet I set to work. The world may have called this madness, but the hand of God was with me. My work succeeded, and I gained friends who loved me. I scarcely knew what I was doing or what I wanted. Yet I was of use. This can only be the work of the Creator, just as the world was created out of nothing…

Then may the works of the Lord unite us again—not as the wicked find one another, but as angels come together…

I sense that my time is drawing near. Yet my work will endure, for gold does not perish in fire; it is only purified.

My friends!
In my youth, I believed the miracles of God to be my own work; I accepted praise and applause with pride. I imagined myself the author of a work that was not mine. Lord, forgive us and remove our blindness!

My friends!
Tomorrow, be better than I have been. Do not be deceived by the pride of

success, and do not shrink if you are called to sacrifice. Enjoy today, but remember: it is like a flower in a garden—it blooms for a short time and then fades.

Tomorrow, shed tears of forgiveness and love upon us. May the blessing of the Creator remain with you.

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Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi